



If our basic model of Society is that of a 'structure of positions', we must regard the period of margin or liminality as an inter-structural situation... [that] indicate[s] and constitutes transitions between states. By 'state' I mean here 'a relatively fixed or stable condition'... ¹

In dynamic urban environments Liminal Bodies are "inter-structural" or transitional spaces. As emergent organisational structures they allow new forms of urbanity to occur, emerging urban settlements defined by and used for interactions, conflicts and negotiations. *The need for them to recognise conflicts, not to try to purify them away in a solidarity myth in order to survive* ²

The *Skin of the Earth* is where we live. This crust forms the physical ground in our lives, we live in it, on it, and are rarely far away from it. It consists of layers with various properties: constant flux, unpredictable behaviour, inexhaustible diversity and incessant rise of new features. The *Second Skin* is a dynamic reticule of cities and their societies, cultures, economics, politics and other factors, a partly indicative and partly mimetic expression of our relationship with the skin of the earth.

Cities have emotions. These conditions, termed *proto-urban conditions* are submerged forces strongly affecting behaviour and actions in urban spaces, giving impetus to urban change. They impel a necessity for a new approach that will deal with urban change, influenced by factors and interactions between macro-economics, ecology, geopolitics, cultural identity. They need new means of observation, modelling, development scenarios and policy formation, as well as new modes of working within such dynamic environments.

From urban in situ studies, theoretical and critical reflection, CHORA developed an original methodology aiming at a. the registering through field work of proto-urban conditions. b. the dynamic modelling of these conditions c. the development of taxonomies and unfoldings of programmes, and d. the institution of liminal bodies that engage in policy formation.

Using this structure the exhibition presents works that range from theoretical, educational and investigative projects to cultural and physical urban propositions sited in Rotterdam (Netherlands), Taichung (Taiwan), Paris (France), Linz (Austria), Bucharest (Romania), Helsinki (Finland) and Alexandrov (Russia)

The exhibition is organised in conjunction with the Symposium *Poldergeist, Contemporary Dutch Architecture* to be held in New York on 11 and 12 April 1997 in the Great Hall at Cooper Union. The materials of this exhibition will be part of the book *The Second Skin*, to be published by The Monacelli Press in March 1998.

This exhibition has been made possible by a grant from the Stichting Fonds voor Beeldende Kunsten, Vormgeving en Bouwkunst in the Netherlands.

- 1 Victor Turner. *Betwixt and Between, from the Forest of Symbols*
- 2 Richard Sennett. *The Uses of Disorder*

Image:

Frome 1. The *Echo Chamber* from the project 'Linzer Entfaltungen, a narrative taxonomy', an urban planning study for the periphery of Linz, Austria, 1994/96, developed during an urban workshop organised by the City of Linz. Four frames are placed on successive sections of the periphery of Linz to exemplify particular proto-urban conditions. The frames gather the topography, demography, physical substance, collective memory and desires. They become urban devices with the aim of creating concrete and effective planning propositions and the policies that make these propositions possible.

Raoul Bunschoten is an architect and founding director of CHORA. He is currently visiting associate professor at Columbia University School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation and professor at the Berlage Institute, Postgraduate Laboratory of Architecture in Amsterdam.

CHORA is a non-profit making organisation based in London focusing on urban studies commissioned by City Authorities, Universities and self-initiated case studies.

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Frome 1. The *Echo Chamber* is an instrument for the production of the city's inner moods, dreams and desires. It consists of actors, agents and a stage. The actors, curators of urban culture, are institutions that invite, instigate and organize such a production. The agents are a string of existing and proposed cultural institutions located on the 'fold', an extension of the medieval city edge on the bank of the Danube. They are operational devices for event design. The stage is a virtual space for events superimposed on an actual topography of an enclosed valley, at the north side of the fold. This zone contains various cultural institutions, sites of religious, historical and architectural value, and an active tradition of festivals, exhibitions and other events.

An exhibition by Raoul Bunschoten with
CHORA Institute for Architecture and Urbanism

8 April 1997 to 24 May 1997

Storefront for Art and Architecture
97 Kenmare Street, New York, NY 10012
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[LIMINAL BODIES]

You are cordially invited to the opening reception
on 11 April, 7pm – 9pm

STOREFRONT

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

97 KENMARE STREET, NEW YORK, NY, 10012, U.S.A. TEL: 212.431.5795 FAX: 212.431.5755

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Raoul Bunschoten in collaboration with CHORA, Liminal Bodies
April 8 - May 24th: Opening Reception, April 11th, 7 - 9 p.m. Storefront

Conference: Poldergeist: Landscape of the Artificial, Critical Debates on Dutch Architecture and Urbanism

April 11-12th, 10-6p.m. Cooper Union

Storefront for Art & Architecture is pleased to announce two important upcoming events related to Dutch architecture: an exhibition of the acclaimed Dutch architect, **Raoul Bunschoten** in collaboration with the institute he founded, **CHORA** (Institute for Architecture and Urbanism, London) titled **Liminal Bodies**; a Conference to be held at Cooper Union titled **Poldergeist: Landscape of the Artificial**, discussing the contemporary situation of Dutch architecture, planning and urbanism vis a vis their evolution and integration into the European Economic Community (EEC).

The idea of the exhibition, **Liminal Bodies** evolved from the work Raoul Bunschoten and CHORA have been developing over a series of years. CHORA is a non-profit London based organization who focuses on urban studies. Their studies, often commissioned by universities, architects, community groups and civic authorities, have been instrumental in developing new models and positions, theoretical and critical analysis on the state of specific urban environments. Their work has ranged from theoretical, educational and investigative projects to cultural and physical urban propositions sited in Rotterdam (Netherlands), Taichung (Taiwan), Paris (France), Linz (Austria), Bucharest (Rumania), Helsinki (Finland) and Alexandrov (Russia). The exhibition at Storefront will be organized in four parts that discusses :

Proto-urban Conditions: Mapping of displaced desires and submerged forces

Meta Space: Dynamic modeling, strategy formulations

City Project Space: The scripting of scenarios

Stirring the Skin: The constitution of liminal bodies

The importance of this exhibition is the investigation of the dynamics of cities (political, economic, ecological, technological, cultural issues) and the construction of models in the application and efforts at developing new institutions for intervention and policy making.

This exhibition has been organized in conjunction with the Conference, **Poldergeist**. The materials of this exhibition will be part of the book, The Second Skin, to be published by Monacelli Press in March, 1998.

Raoul Bunschoten is currently a visiting Professor at Columbia University and the Berlage Institute in Amsterdam, Holland.

Poldergeist: Landscape of the Artificial, Critical Debates on Dutch Architecture and Urbanism, conceived by both Kyong Park, Director at Storefront and Dutch critic, Bart Lootsma, offers the public a meaningful exposure to the context and challenges that confront Dutch architecture and urbanism today. By examining the unique history of Dutch urban development and its current state, a new paradigm may emerge for new architectural and urbanistic solutions that could have a broad impact, not only in Europe, but the United States as well.

The Dutch situation presents interesting insights and lessons. Historically there had been a strong tradition of national planning, urbanism and architecture in which the Dutch government worked closely with architects, planners and designers, particularly in the field of social housing. As a result of the developments within the European community and global economy over the past decade that has witnessed a shift away from a nation state to notions of regionalism and expansion, housing in Holland is no longer subsidized by the state. This represents a remarkable situation given the fact that 70% of the built environment in Holland, was constructed after WWII within this collaboration between government and architects/urban planners and designers. The Dutch are now confronted with the challenge of finding new opportunities and potentials given this situation. There needs to be a new adaptation and repositioning. The Conference therefore, comes at a timely and important historical moment and provides the opportunity to discuss what the challenges are and what the applications could be not just for Holland, but for other European and American situations. Perhaps new models can be suggested that are applicable to international urban centers.

Participants include Noud de Vreeze, Anne Mie Devolder, Arnold Reijndorp, Kristin Feireiss, Bart Lootsma, Roemer van Toorn, West 8 Landscape Architects (Wim Kloosterboer), MVRDV (Winy Maas), Drost & Van Veen, Raoul Bunschoten, Wiel Arets, Ben van Berkel, NOX (Lars Spuybroek), Ton Venhoeven. **Modertors** include Christine Boyer, Greg Lynn, Stan Allen, and Aaron Betsky.

In connection with this Conference, Storefront will publish a book in collaboration with Princeton Architectural Press on the event's proceedings as well as including other contextual essays. The editor will be Bart Lootsma.

For more information contact Paola Morrongiello at 212 431 5795

Liminal Bodies

an exhibition by Raoul Bunschoten and CHORA

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From urban in situ studies, theoretical and critical reflection, CHORA developed an original methodology aiming at: the registering, through field work, of proto-urban conditions; the dynamic modeling of these conditions; and the unfolding of programs, policy making and institution and liminal bodies formation.

The works exhibited range from theoretical, educational and investigative projects to cultural and physical urban propositions sited in Rotterdam (Netherlands), Taichung (Taiwan), Paris (France), Linz (Austria), Bucharest (Romania), Helsinki (Finland) and Alexandrov (Russia).

Raoul Bunschoten is an architect and founding director of CHORA (Institute of Architecture and Urbanism) in London, England. He is currently visiting Associate Professor at Columbia University School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation and Professor at the Berlage Institute, Post Graduate Laboratory of Architecture in Amsterdam, Holland.

CHORA is a non-profit organization based in London which focuses on urban studies. Commissioned by city governments, authorities, universities and self-initiated cases, CHORA is lead by a core team formed by Alain Chiaradia, Peter Hasdell and Takuro Hoshino and in conjunction with numerous associates in London and abroad.

This exhibition was organized in conjunction with the Symposium, "Poldergeist, Contemporary Dutch Architecture" to be held in New York on April 11th and 12th at the Cooper Union. The materials of this exhibition will comprise part of the book The Second Skin to be published by Monacelli Press in March, 1998.

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